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INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 0371  
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH 0443  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 002128

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/ARP AMACDONALD AND INR JYAPHE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/28/2019  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PNAT](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [YM](#)  
SUBJECT: SOUTH'S INDEPENDENCE DAY COULD TURN VIOLENT

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY. Against a backdrop of resurgent separatist sentiments in the south, large and potentially violent protests are expected on November 30, the day marking the south's independence from Britain. Signs of greater organization among the Southern Mobility Movement (SMM) and recent anti-ROYG actions by members of the movement could spell trouble for demonstrators. SMM leaders could be taking advantage of the ROYG's preoccupation with the Sa'ada war in the north to regroup and unify their efforts for southern independence. END SUMMARY.

SOUTHERN MOVEMENT GROWS BOLDER, CLASHES WITH ROYG  
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12. (C) The Southern Mobility Movement (SMM), as the separatist factions in the south have dubbed themselves, is showing signs of greater organization and growing frustration with the north, a development which could result in a clash with ROYG forces on November 30. (NOTE: On November 30, 1967 the British-administered and funded Federation of South Arabia became independent, marking the end of British rule. END NOTE.) In statements published in Aden Press, a pro-secessionist Arabic language daily on November 21, SMM leader Sheikh Hasan Muhammad Banan al-Diyuli called for the recognition of former PDRY president Ali Salim al-Baidh and unity among the southern governorates to achieve separation from the north. SMM leaders gathered in Shabwah at Diyuli's request to discuss greater unity among the factions and agreed on the creation of the "Revolutionary Command Council" to unite all of Shabwah's leadership against the north. Furthermore, Diyuli noted plans for demonstrations on November 25 and warned "the axis commander" and the security chief that they "must understand they would not be safe if any Shabwah citizen is killed or wounded during the festival." On November 25 at least 5 protestors and 2 policemen were killed as the demonstrations in Ataq, in the southern province of Shabwah, turned violent. Press reports indicate that demonstrators were carrying the flag of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY), the name of the former socialist southern nation which was an independent country until unification in 1990. Late the following day, armed Southern movement activists blocked the main highway from Sana'a to Aden, cutting off the southern port city (and Eid al-Adha travelers) from the capital. According to a Reuters report from Aden, mediation by tribal leaders convinced the armed activists to end their blockade of the highway on November 27.

13. (C) Considering the growing tension between the ROYG and the south and the cycle of violence that occurs with each imprisonment of previous protestors, potential for violent clashes on November 30 remains high. Ahmed al-Sharqi, cousin and confidante of SMM spokesman Dr. Abdul Hameed al-Sharqi, told EmbOff on November 24 that the SMM is currently drafting

a platform to express its desired end-state and guiding principles for the movement. One of the principles outlines the SMM's belief in peaceful protest, but authorizes protestors to carry weapons and engage in "self-defense" if threatened. In addition, the platform calls for complete secession from the north and the re-establishment of Aden as the capital of an independent southern Yemen. The remaining pillars of the five-point platform describe the nature of the desired future state, disavowing any affiliation with Islah and other "fundamentalist" Islamic influences, the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) and communist ideology, and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and any other terrorist organization.

COMMENT

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14. (C) The potential for violence on November 30 cannot be dismissed. A recent upsurge in protest activity, clashes with ROYG forces, and a stated willingness to "defend themselves" if threatened all point to a bolder approach by the southern movement. The recent calls for unity among the factions of the southern movement and the creation of a platform also indicate a higher level of coordination and organization than seen previously and may demonstrate the SMM's desire to take advantage of the ROYG's preoccupation with the Houthi rebellion in the north, a development which has long been expected but has yet to materialize until now.

END COMMENT.

BRYAN